THE TENTH DAY.

Monday, the 21st March, 1932.

The Assembly met again at 11-30 A. M. on Monday, the 21st March 1932, the Dewan presiding.

174. Public service and other needs.

MR. K. M. CHACKO (*Changanachery taluk, Group II*) said that in olden days there was perfect religious toleration in Travancore and the Proclamation of 1829 which regulated the procedure to be adopted in erecting churches and other places of worship required the Sirkar to fix a site for the purpose after due enquiry on receipt of an application for the same. But this Proclamation was repealed by the Proclamation of 1898, under which the applicant had to satisfy certain conditions before he could get the required permission. In the first place, the names of all places of public worship situated within half a mile of the proposed site had to be mentioned in the application, and also whether any religious processions used to pass by or in the vicinity of the site. These two conditions were unnecessary. In Travancore there were numerous Hindu temples in the immediate neighbourhood of churches and mosques, which showed that nearness of places of worship would not cause any annoyance to any of the parties concerned. Further, there were many *Ammankoils* within half a mile in almost all the *karas*, so much so that any application for erection of churches could be rejected on this ground. Again, though the Proclamation of 1898 did not insist on the applicant having full proprietorship over the proposed site, many applications were rejected on the ground of want of full proprietorship over the site. This condition was not workable in practice, because an applicant could not safely purchase the site before he knew that his application would be sanctioned and if he did not purchase the site, the application would be rejected on that ground. Absence of necessity for a church at the proposed place was a new ground for rejecting applications for erecting places of worship. The officers who were responsible to make enquiries and report on such applications *viz.*, the Provertikars, Tahsildars and Peishkars, were all caste Hindus, all who were generally prejudiced against such applications.

In regard to burial grounds, a G.O. was issued during the Dewanship of Mr. V. S. Subrahmanya Aiyar that no person should open a cemetery attached to any place of public worship without the previous permission of the Government nor should he use any existing cemetery without such permission. A violation of this order was also made punishable under Section 182 of the Travancore Penal Code. This G. O. was invalid as the Government had no power to make such rules without authorisation by a Regulation or Proclamation. The G. O. applied only to cemeteries and not to cremation or burial

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grcunds of Hindus, who were free to burn or bury their dead on their own lands. To the Christians cemeteries were as indispensable as churches. The G. O. should therefore be immediately cancelled. The necessary modifications should also be made in the rules regarding the grant of permission to erect churches.

Speaking of representative institutions in the State, the member said with special reference to the Assembly that the franchise should be broadened. The 43 members returned by taluk voters were elected by 5,723 voters, of whom only 1,983 actually voted. Similar was the case with the other representative institutions in the State. In reforming the constitution of the Assembly every citizen of the country should be given the privilege to elect a representative. If this was nct possible immediately, at least communal constituencies should be constituted. The policy adopted by the Government in the matter of nomination to the Assembly, the Legislative Council and other representative bodies was not at all satisfactory. The Government reserved the power of nomination to give due representation to important and unrepresented communities. The Latin Catholics were treated by the Government as a separate community and a member from the community was nominated to each of the last three Councils. But in nominating members to the fourth Council their claims were ignored. Due representation should be given to Catholics and other unrepresented communities in all the representative institutions of the State. Though the Catholics maintained a good number of schools and other educational institutions in Travancore, there was not a single member belonging to the community in the Text-Book Committees. In reconstituting the Text-Book Committees, Catholics also should be duly represented.

The Catholics were inadequately represented in the public service. Out of the total population of 5 millions, the Catholics numbered about a million. The Government had accepted the principle of communal representation in public service and had also issued the necessary circulars and orders to the heads of the various departments accordingly. Still the unrepresented communities, especially the Catholics, did not get due representation in Government service. The Devaswom branch of the Revenue Department was separated in 1922, with a view to meet the demands of the non-caste Hindus for appointments in the Land Revenue Department. But, so far, the Catholics did not get any benefit from it. Of the 58 higher grade officers in the Land Revenue Department, there was only one Catholic, an acting Tahsildar, while the Brahmins who did not number more than 50,000, held 24 appointments. The claims of the Catholics should be considered in filling up the impending vacancies of Dewan Peishkars and Division Assistants. Again in the Huzur Office, out of the 27 higher grade officers, 11 were Brahmins, while only one was a Catholic. In the Account Office there were only 2 Catholic officers out of 25. In the Judicial Department there were 145 higher grade officers, of whom the Catholics numbered only 6. Similar was the case in all the departments. In the case of lower grade officers, the condition was worse.

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Among the 406 Provertikars in the Land Revenue Department there was only one Catholic. It was true that the Government had appointed a Public Service Committee. But it would have been better if the Government had adopted the policy followed by the Madras Government in the matter instead of appointing the Committee. It would have saved public time and money. It was many months since the Committee was appointed, but it had not yet begun work. The Committee should be asked to expedite its report and, in the meantime, the Government should try to redress the grievances of the community in the matter.

DEWAN'S REPLY: The object of the rules, Mr. Chacko, which Government have laid down about the building of churches, was to prevent conflicts between religious interests, and, at the same time, to offer no impediment to freedom of worship. The number of churches and religious buildings erected during the last few years seems to show that this object has been gained. As regards your remarks about the reporting of officers, within the last few weeks, I must have seen about half a dozen reports, and all of them struck me as being very fair indeed.

The rule about cemeteries is under consideration.

Your suggestions about representation in this House will no doubt be considered with the reform of this Assembly.

Nomination is a difficult matter. With the representation of a large number of communities has to be considered the question of not making the body too unwieldy. As a consequence, very often, a community will not be represented on one occasion, but will have to wait for its turn next time. If all small communities are to be represented, it will make the body much too unwieldy to work. The minority communities must all take their turn by rotation.

As I have already said more than once, I hope the report of the Recruitment Committee will not take long to come. Of course, it will only deal with initial appointments. Communal considerations must not be allowed to weigh in appointments when officers are once in service.

175. Public service.

MR. K. P. AUGUSTINE (*Kunnatnad taluk, Group II*) said that in the matter of representation in the public service, the Catholic community suffered most. The Catholics were second to no other community in the State in educational advancement, economic interests and organised communal strength. The community numbered about a million and every sixth citizen in the State was a Roman Catholic. The Government should show better sympathy towards the Catholics and accord them their legitimate share of appointments in the public service. Though it had been assured that the policy of the Government in this matter was to give equal opportunities to all clases of the people, this policy had not been kept in view so far, as the Catholics were concerned, though they were not behind any other community in point of educational advancement or qualification.

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